



largemouth bass

Micropterus salmoides

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Centrarchidae

Features

The largemouth bass is characterized by an upper jaw that extends behind the eye when the mouth is closed. A dark stripe is present along each side. The body is dark green on the back and upper sides with a white belly. It is a rather slender streamlined fish. Largemouth bass reach lengths up to 16 inches in their third year of life. The state record weighed 10 3/4 pounds and was 23 1/2 inches long.

Natural History

The largemouth bass lives in lakes, ponds, sloughs, rivers, and impoundments. It seeks areas with little or no current. It eats mainly fish, crayfish, and large insects but will eat most any animal in the water that it can swallow. It is active at night. Reaching maturity at an age of three years, it spawns from May through June. The male builds a nest by fanning his fins near the bottom. The female deposits 2,000 to 100,000 eggs that hatch in three to six days. The male guards the eggs and young, staying with them for some time

after they leave the nest. The largemouth bass has an average life span of five to six years.

Habitats

interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; Mississippi River; Missouri River

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.